

Anna Jakimyszyn

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CRACOW – ANALYSIS BASED ON THE CRACOW COMMUNITY CHARTER OF 5355 AND SUPPLEMENTS

The administration system and system solutions applied in Jewish communities in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were defined under state authority regulations (general and regional privileges, royal decrees and orders of regional governors), local and private legislation and internal regulations of Jewish authorities.

This article portrays the mechanisms under which Jewish communities functioned in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by analyzing Cracow Community Charter regulations,¹ constituting the oldest surviving, fully intact and – at the same time – model set of legal provisions issued by the community authorities, defining community life as a whole and, furthermore, the system and method of managing the kahal, the powers of persons working for the benefit of the community, their mutual relationships and the manner in which they were appointed.

The Jewish community system in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the modern era, particularly the manner in which the Cracow kahal operated, has been the subject of research of many historians. The problem has been studied in detail by the eminent Jewish historian of the inter-war period, Majer Bałaban.² This article is an attempt at continuing and complementing the subject.

The Cracow Community Charter, drawn up by the kahal³ on 23 July 1595⁴ and later elaborated with regulations introduced by the community authorities in 1604, 1606, 1610 and 1615, was to remain binding – as originally agreed upon by legislators – for

¹ All citations and footnotes in this article concerning the Cracow Community Charter of 5355 come from the Cracow Community Charter published by Majer Bałaban; Majer Bałaban, „Die Krakauer Judengemeinde Ordnung von 1595 und ihre Nachträge” in *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch – literarischen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt a/M. 1912–1913, part I, pp. 296–360 and „Die Krakauer Judengemeinde Ordnung von 1595 und ihre Nachträge” in *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch – literarischen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt a/M. 1916, part II, pp. 88–114. In the next part of this article this publication stands for the abbreviation *KJO*.

² M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu 1304–1868*, vol. I: 1304–1655, Cracow 1931, vol. II: 1656–1868, Cracow 1936 (Reprint: Cracow 1991),

M. Bałaban, *Stan kahału krakowskiego na przełomie XVII i XVIII wieku*, Warsaw 1931,

M. Bałaban, „Ustrój gminy żydowskiej w XVI–XX w. (nowe badania naukowe)”, *Głos Gminy Żydowskiej*, I (1937), pp. 4–7, 33–34, 81–82, 101–103, 129, 131, II (1938) pp. 30–32, 53–55, 82–84, 103–105, 130–132, 176–178, 204–207, III (1939) pp. 6–8, 29–31, 54–56, 79–82, 104–107,

M. Bałaban, „Ustrój kahału w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku”, *Kwartalnik Poświęcony Badaniu Przeszłości Żydów w Polsce*, I (1912), zeszyt 2, pp. 17–54.

³ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 93, p. 104.

⁴ 23 July 1595 = 17 aw 5355.

a period of three years only⁵ (till 1 October 1598),⁶ but in practice it regulated the lives of Cracow Jews right up to the partitions of Poland.⁷ Furthermore, it acted as a legislative model for regulations issued in the country's remaining communities, though none of these could match the comprehensive legal norms contained in the original document. In the majority of cases community charters have not survived or only fragments of them remain. The Cracow Community Charter has survived almost in entirety thanks to the copy which was drawn up and published by Majer Bałaban.⁸

In all Polish communities the custom of choosing new community authorities was obligatory during elections organized in the intermediate days of Passover. Elections differed from one another only in terms of level of indirectness (bi- or tri- level elections) and number of those nominating and those elected.

This deadline was also obligatory in the community of Cracow. Its charter instructed that elections take place in the Jewish quarters on the first free day of the above-mentioned feast.⁹ At the same time the Cracow provisions contained a regulation permitting earlier nomination of tax estimators (Hebr. שמאים) – officials engaged in community treasury matters – just after the Fair of Lublin, which followed Candlemas (2 February).¹⁰ In order to elect new community authority members each community council member – in keeping with Cracow electoral law – had the right to place in the voting urn a card with the name of one citizen,¹¹ of which the community beadle (Hebr. שמש של הקהל) chose nine (Hebr. תשעה אנשים), and these constituted the first group of the elected. Next, out of the nine men were chosen five community members (Hebr. חמשה אנשים) and these constituted the „parent committee” (Hebr. כשרים or בוררים), the members of which appointed the community authority itself.¹² At the same time, in reference to all stages of the election, emphasis was made on several occasions under Cracow electoral law that it was forbidden to put forward as candidates any acting primores and persons related to the electing person, with detailed reference being made to level of relationship and type of link between the nominee and the nominator (persons related up to the third degree, the father of the fiancé or fiancée, friends and partners were all excluded).¹³ Furthermore, electors were required to swear an oath guaranteeing that the elections had been carried out honestly and had permitted „for the common good the choice of persons regarded as wise and competent”.¹⁴

Electors, apart from determining community council members – the Cracow community comprised 4 primores (Hebr. ראשים), 5 boni viri (Hebr. טובים) and 14 kahal members (Hebr. ארבעה עשר קהל) – also nominated judges (Hebr. דיינים) [three to each of the three governing bodies] and charity wardens (Hebr. גבאים). At

⁵ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 93, p. 104.

⁶ 1 October 1598 = Rosh Hashanah 5359.

⁷ The partitions of Poland – the division of the Poland's territories between Prusia, Austria and Russia, in: 1772, 1795 and between Prusia and Russia in 1793.

⁸ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, pp. 296–360 and pp. 88–114.

⁹ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 309.

¹⁰ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 70, pp. 349–350.

¹¹ Every community member with full rights [landlords (Hebr. בעל הבית) with hazaka rights, those paying tax and benefits] had the passive right to vote.

¹² M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, pp. 314–317.

¹³ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 315, p. 317.

¹⁴ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 315.

the same time they appointed supervisors (Hebr. ממונים) [who looked after order in the community], three accountants (Hebr. בעלי חשבונו), officials supervising matters concerning orphans (Hebr. אלופים על היתומים),¹⁵ liquor tax¹⁶ fund supervisors (Yidd. טשפאורי על הקעסטיל של טשפאורי),¹⁷ Council of the Four Lands¹⁸ delegates (Hebr. ראשי מדינות), cantor (Hebr. חזן), a public bath attendant (Yidd. בעדיר), ritual slaughterers (Hebr. שוחטים), a bailiff (Yidd., Polish שקולניק), beadles (Hebr. שמשים), primary school teachers (Hebr. מלמדים) and a stadlan (Hebr. שתדלן).¹⁹

It is clear from the above selection of nominated persons that electors had the right to determine candidates occupying the highest posts in the community, as well as those of lower rank. It is also clear that in Cracow, much the same as in other communities, persons working for the benefit of the community did not constitute a uniform group, but were divided into officials fulfilling their duties as a matter of honour and free of charge (unlike judges belonging to the lower and middle level bodies)²⁰ and functionaries, remunerated by the community council or receiving payment for part of their activities. In keeping with electoral law all citizens had the right to qualify for official posts, but it was usually the case that the richer members of the community²¹ held these posts as their wealth permitted them to fulfil their duties without the need to seek financial gain. However, this did not mean that they dominated throughout the community structure of authority. Apart from remuneration matters concerning officials and functionaries there was also a difference between these two posts in terms of authority, types of duties, work location and work training. Additionally, in keeping with charter requirements, all persons holding office in the community had to be generally recognized as being respectable, competent and honest.

The first of the above-mentioned groups may be divided into level of authority and type of post within the community hierarchy, which allows the distinguishing of officials according to the following bi-level scheme:

- the Community Council (referred to as the Board or the appropriate kahal);
- members of the community commission and the men who participated in brotherhoods and associations operating in the community or who represented the community's outside interests.

The overall conviction amongst communities in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth suggesting that collective decisions held supremacy over individual ones led to the creation of a system which saw the prevailing principal of “the majority must be seen” and carried out in the Cracow community by submitting all key

¹⁵ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316, §§ 19–36, p. 323.

¹⁶ Liquor tax (Yidd., טשפאורי Polish *czopowe*) – the tax on alcoholic beverages (including beer and mead), instituted by the Sejm in 1466 as a source of revenue for the royal treasury.

¹⁷ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316, §§ 19–36, p. 323.

¹⁸ Council of the Four Lands (Hebr. ועד ארבע ארצות) – the official body representing the interests of the Jewish communities from Great Poland, Little Poland, Volhynia, Red Ruthenia and until 1623 Lithuania; worked between 1581 and 1764.

¹⁹ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316, §§ 19–36, p. 323.

²⁰ First (hebr. דינינים שניים) and second level judges (Hebr. דינינים שניים) would be remunerated by litigating parties at a level reflecting the value of the lawsuit; M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 50, p. 332.

²¹ M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 12–13, pp. 318–319.

decisions concerning community functioning to the Community Council, but with the reservation that all decisions taken by it must be in keeping with charter regulations.

The number of officials on the Board was decided at the discretion of each community, depending on local tradition and requirements.²² In the community of Cracow the community Board of twenty three contained four primores²³ (Hebr. מנהיגים or ראשים or פרנסים) and five boni viri (Hebr. טובים).²⁴ Both these groups are frequently referred to in the Charter of Cracow as one under the title „elders” or dignitaries (Hebr. אלופים). The Community Council was supplemented by a group of fourteen elected (Hebr. ארבעה עשר קהל or י”ד הנבררים קרואי עדה).²⁵

The primores, the highest ranked group of community officials, as the only board representatives reporting to the non-Jewish authorities,²⁶ had to – in keeping with tradition confirmed by an entry in the charter – within a period of fourteen days of being appointed to their post, receive confirmation of such from the authorities.²⁷ Each month from amongst themselves²⁸ and the supervisors²⁹ they chose one man, who in that month had secured the widest range of authority granted to the unit, thus becoming parnas of the month. In specialist literature the term ‘parnas of the month’ (Hebr. פרנס החודש) – through analogy to official titles used in German towns and Polish centres founded under Magdeburg law – is also referred to as ‘mayor’ or ‘head of the kahal’³⁰ (Hebr. ראש הקהל).³¹ The Charter of Cracow refers to both functions, suggesting³² that these title called also other primores.

Cracow regulations presenting the honours flowing from the respectable post of parnas, depict the full scope of authority of these officials, which involve representative, administrative, judicial and tax-finance supervision tasks. Furthermore, they present the full burden of responsibilities falling on those units housing such a post, the consequences and the measures directed at limiting the dictatorial role of parnas in managing the community. An expression of the latter are regulations placing a ceiling on the amount released by community coffers and defining the value of gifts at the parnas’s disposal in the form of spices (pepper and saffron) offered to the non-Jewish authorities and the clergy.³³ The Chapter of Cracow presents the limitations imposed on the parnas as a result of his office. These include prohibition to leave the community during the term of office³⁴ or the requirement to pay twenty zlotys out of one’s own pocket, should the kahal fund run dry, and the reservation that the parnas

²² M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, vol. I, p. 346 and M. Schorr, *Organizacja Żydów w Polsce (od najdawniejszych czasów do r. 1772)*, Lwov 1899, p. 21.

²³ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316.

²⁴ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316.

²⁵ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316.

²⁶ Supervision of the kahal in the royal cities and the right to approve Jewish authorities was granted to the Voivode, with owners or their powers of attorney playing the same role in the case of private property.

²⁷ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 315.

²⁸ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 318.

²⁹ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 73, p. 359.

³⁰ M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, vol. I, p. 329.

³¹ M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, vol. I, p. 329.

³² „Community chairmen (Hebr. ראש הקהל) or the juror (Hebr. טוב הקהל) ought to tell the parnas of the month (Hebr. פרנס החודש)”; M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 321.

³³ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 14, p. 319.

³⁴ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 321.

has no right to dispose of this amount in any way he wishes.³⁵ This entry in the regulations indicates that not everyone was worthy of the office of *parnas*, and that the post was granted to the wealthiest citizens, who were capable of financially supporting the community in case of need. Furthermore, in taking any decision concerning the entire community the *parnas* of the month had to take into consideration the opinions and comments of all of the inhabitants,³⁶ the regulations passed by the Council of the Four Lands³⁷ and charter provisions which, upon taking up office, he had to be acquainted with in order to „know how to work for the good and avoid the evil.”³⁸ *Parناس* of the month who had authority to supervise the work of the remaining officials and functionaries, was not allowed to interfere in their duties, and in particular was not permitted to influence the decisions of magistrates, nor impose on tax estimators and tax collectors,³⁹ but was permitted to carry out certain public functions and duties only on approval by, and in the presence of, “elders” or the full body of the community Council.

Much the same as other communities the remaining Council members of the Cracow community also supported and checked⁴⁰ measures taken by the *parnas* of the month by participating in processing the most important matters relating to the community and fulfilling their public duties. Board members had the right to seek the help of lower level officials and functionaries employed by the community. One of the local scribes (Hebr. סופר), participated in all of the sittings of the Council in order to take the minutes of approved decisions.⁴¹ One or two community beadles (Hebr. שמש של הקהל)⁴² also participated in the sittings. These were expected to carry out a wide range of recommendations issued by the *kahal*, but in particular the *parnas* of the month.

A number of honorary official posts were held by committee members who sat together with the Board. Their number and composition depended on the range of duties and population of the community. Four committees dominated the Cracow community:

- the judicial committee,
- the treasury committee,
- the welfare committee,
- the community public order committee.

Cracow committees made use of two operational models. The first of these helped improve work quality of officials who belonged to them. By employing their own group of functionaries they were able to make use of all four committee sections. Each of the three three-person bodies of magistrates (Hebr. דיינים), operating in the Cracow

³⁵ M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 12–13, p. 318–319.

³⁶ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 318.

³⁷ The Lublin Act of 22 November 1580 [15 kislew 5341] regulated *parnas* of the month measures concerning liquor tax, mints and salt-mines; M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 310–311.

³⁸ M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 308.

³⁹ M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 326.

⁴⁰ M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 314.

⁴¹ M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 325.

⁴² In the event of meetings being attended exclusively by *primores* and *boni viri* a beadle was asked to attend on their recommendation, and in the event of the Council also containing „14 elected” two beadles were expected to attend; M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 325.

community hired a beadle (Hebr. שמש אצל דיינים),⁴³ who acted as caretaker⁴⁴ and also paid for a local scribe (Hebr. סופר דמטא) participating in lawsuits to note down pronounced sentences or to make copies of them.⁴⁵ The treasury committee operated in a similar manner. It was made up of three tax estimators (Hebr. שמאים),⁴⁶ who calculated revenue and assets of each inhabitant and the amount of tax owed the kahal and the state. Furthermore, an official⁴⁷ was used to impose taxes on persons related to members of the treasury committee, as well as three „second treasury committee” men⁴⁸ responsible for defining the level of tax to be paid by the tax estimators themselves and finally the tax collectors (Hebr. גובי מסים), who were divided into functionaries taking money from affluent citizens with full rights, and functionaries collecting tax from the poor and people, who didn't have the hazaka.⁴⁹ On the basis of an entry in the chapter it is known that in 1594/1595 [5355] the collection of benefits from the latter of the mentioned groups was entrusted to Dawid, son of Natan Blums. In this period the composition of the section was complemented by the official community collectors Icchak Speckl and Aaron Uldom⁵⁰, who recovered money from unwilling taxpayers. The situation was no different in the case of the welfare section, members of which were charity wardens (Hebr. גבאי צדקה or גבאים), headed by the welfare administrator of the given month, in other words the charity collector of the month (Hebr. גבאי החודש), who operated the community aid system, looked after procedures with the poor and was responsible for level of issued alms, which were gathered by charity collector messengers (Hebr. שליחים גבאים)⁵¹ and welfare beadles (Hebr. שמשים של גבאים or שמשים צדקה).⁵² The treasurer (Hebr. גובה צדקה)⁵³ was in charge of settlements. The municipal order section, members of which were the supervisors (Hebr. ממונים),⁵⁴ had a similar approach to that of another section described above. This approach involved cooperation with smaller, often three-man committees, which offered support by helping fulfil duties. The Cracow chapter explains that supervisors, responsible for ensuring that products sold in the Jewish quarter were kosher, acted in defining the cleanliness of goods with two committees. The first of these was the one in which Moshe son of Samuel, Joshua Darszan and Abraham Icchak Reuslich sat.⁵⁵ They ensured that dairy products were kosher. The

⁴³ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 50, p. 333.

⁴⁴ Community court beadles were expected to submit the summons, inform those concerned about the court summons, carry out corporal punishment as sentenced by the court, collect fines and pledges, escort the sentenced to prison and leave them there and, in the event of persons demonstrating obstinacy towards community jurisdiction, announce their names publicly or the fact that a curse had been placed on them; M. Balaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 313, § 16, p. 320, §§ 19–36, p. 326, § 54, p. 334, § 61, p. 338.

⁴⁵ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 50, pp. 332–333.

⁴⁶ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 70, p. 350.

⁴⁷ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 70, p. 350.

⁴⁸ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 70, p. 350.

⁴⁹ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 71, p. 354.

⁵⁰ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 71, p. 354.

⁵¹ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 67, p. 344.

⁵² M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 67, pp. 341–345.

⁵³ L. Hońdo, *Stary żydowski cmentarz w Krakowie. Historia cmentarza. Analiza hebrajskich inskrypcji*, Cracow 1999, p. 135.

⁵⁴ We don't know for sure how many (four or five) supervisors were in the Cracow community at the turn of the 16th century; M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316 and § 72, p. 356.

⁵⁵ M. Balaban, *KJO*, § 72, p. 357.

second, headed by rabbi Mendl,⁵⁶ comprised three officials: Tanhum, Moshe Zalkind and Moshe Sofer.⁵⁷ These ensured that wine was kosher.

Community officials occupied places in educational, school and welfare brotherhoods and associations. Cracow regulations do not contain any detailed information on the manner in which these functioned, as they were defined under separate charters⁵⁸ and special groups of officials, fulfilling only one specific task – they were, for example, responsible for orphan-related matters (Hebr. *הקעסטיל של טשפאווי* (אלופים על היתומים) or liquor tax fund supervisors (Yidd. *ממונים על*).⁵⁹ Alongside these a certain group of community officials also represented the community authorities and the general interests of the community externally, particularly at fairs, to which primores and magistrates were delegated. These community officials were also present at sessions of the Council of the Four Lands, to which the Cracow community sent representatives chosen by primores of the Three Lands (Great Poland, Little Poland and Red Ruthenia).⁶⁰

The second group of people working for the community was the team of functionaries which carried out duties in exchange for remuneration paid from the community coffers or from a portion of the fees they collected or from the collection of debt funds.⁶¹ Persons acting as functionaries in the Cracow community were chosen by five men (Hebr. *חמשה אנשים*) fulfilling the duties of electors⁶² or appointed by the Community Council at one of its first sittings. Much the same as the group of officials this group also was not uniform in terms of hierarchy of posts. The group may be divided into two: first of all four offices may be distinguished – rabbi, cantor, ritual slaughterer and beadle – each necessary for the independent functioning of the community and, secondly, the functionaries may be divided into groups depending on place of work and granted authority.

The Cracow charter offers relatively little information concerning the range of duties of the first three of the four above-mentioned functionaries. The most important remunerated community post – that of rabbi (Hebr. *רב*) – during charter codification work was held by Mendel ben Awigdor,⁶³ who is mentioned in the document provisions a number of times. The absence of details explaining duties surrounding this post⁶⁴ is an indication of the level of independence on the part of the Cracow rabbinate from the community authorities. Cracow regulations indicate merely the existence of two posts, combined with the above function – that of preacher (Hebr. *דרשן*),⁶⁵ who

⁵⁶ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 73, p. 359.

⁵⁷ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, pp. 108–109.

⁵⁸ M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu 1304–1868*, vol. I, Cracow 1931, pp. 471–474.

⁵⁹ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 11, p. 316.

⁶⁰ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, pp. 323–324.

⁶¹ The beadle of the welfare collectors took one quarter zloty of the money collected for the benefit of the poor, whilst prison guards took three grosz from prisoners; M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 54 p. 334 and § 67, p. 342.

⁶² M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 323.

⁶³ Mendel ben Awigdor, or specifically Jezajasz Menachem ben Izaak, acted as Cracow rabbi between 1595 and 1599.

⁶⁴ The Charter of Cracow only mentions that the rabbi supervised schooling in the community and ensured that all sold products were kosher; M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 322 and § 73, p. 359.

⁶⁵ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 80, p. 93 and § 87, p. 97.

acted as an assistant and deputy rabbi and Head of the Yeshiva (Hebr. ראש ישיבה).⁶⁶ In a similar manner, in reference to the post of cantor (Hebr. שליח צבור or חזן) – another important community functionary who was in charge of divine service in the synagogue⁶⁷ – the Cracow regulations merely mention the employment of the cantor at the Old Synagogue and emphasize his dominant role amongst Cracow community cantors.⁶⁸ In the case of the ritual slaughterers (Hebr. שוחטים) who carry out slaughter in keeping with kosher principles, Cracow regulations indicate that only they, acting under the eye of the rabbi and the supervisors, have authority, as specialists in their field, to slaughter animals.⁶⁹ Of the above functions the post of beadle (Hebr. שמש) is most often mentioned. Cracow beadles may be divided into two groups. The basic category is work experience, which distinguishes long-term employees, known as senior (Hebr. עליונים שמשים) and junior beadles i.e. lower level beadles (Hebr. יאונטר שמשים, Yidd. אונטר שמשים).⁷⁰ The other division stems from an analysis of non-uniform scope of duties and workplace distinguishing community beadles (Hebr. שמשים הקהילה), carrying out the recommendations of the kahal and specific officials, assistants employed by kahal committees, magistrates (Hebr. שמשים אצל דינים) and charity wardens (Hebr. שמשים של גבאים), synagogue (Hebr. שמשים בית הכנסת) or beit-hamidrash beadles.⁷¹

It is interesting to note that in the case of the post of beadle there appears in the text of the Charter of Cracow a clear differentiation between the function of beadle (Hebr. שמש) and that of bailiff (Yidd., Polish שקולניק). In many instances specialist literature⁷² treated both posts as one and the same thing, with each name being used interchangeably. Under charter provisions it was the bailiff's right to inform inhabitants of crimes committed in a given week by announcing them in the houses of citizens as well as the synagogue, where information about offences was displayed on the door.⁷³ Even though it is accepted that the function of bailiff emerged from the post of beadle, it is known on the basis of research that the Cracow community at the turn of the 16th century knew these functions as independent posts.

Beadles, who originally were sent outside the community in order to represent its interests, also gave rise to the function of stadlan (Hebr. שתדלן)⁷⁴ – power of attorney of the kahal and its inhabitants in matters relating to the state, nobility, the clergy and the municipal authorities.⁷⁵ In the community of Cracow this function was merged with

⁶⁶ It was the obligation of the community rabbi to manage the college in which the Talmud was studied. For this reason his duties were combined with the authority of the Head of the Yeshiva. In Cracow both these posts were held by e.g. Moses Isserles. In the Charter of Cracow the Head of the Yeshiva is mentioned as someone to whom gifts may be given; M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 87, p. 99 and p. 111.

⁶⁷ It was the cantor's duty to sing-recite prayers, to supervise the appropriate progress of prayers, to call authorized persons to read the Torah and to remind everyone at Synagogue of binding kahal regulations and provisions; M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 308, 314 and § 69, p. 349.

⁶⁸ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 323.

⁶⁹ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, p. 110.

⁷⁰ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 67, p. 343 and § 69, p. 349.

⁷¹ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 323.

⁷² M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, vol. I, pp. 341–345.

⁷³ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 310, 313.

⁷⁴ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 323, § 41, p. 328.

⁷⁵ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 41, p. 328.

that of Jewish banker, who lent money to students of the Cracow Academy.⁷⁶ The need to know Polish, indispensable in contacts with non-Jews, caused the stadlan to take over in part the duties of city scribe (Hebr. סופר Ahram. ספרא דמתא) – the community secretary – who drew up a variety of documents for the needs of the entire community or its inhabitants. Control over these documents, as well as the securing of money, bills of exchange and community contracts was granted to the trustee (Hebr. נאמן, Yidd. וויערניק) who acted as kahal cashier. Simultaneously, the community of Cracow used the same title in Hebrew to describe the community notary, who worked together with the bailiff⁷⁷ and acted as watchman-secretary, noting down the names of those leaving the quarter.⁷⁸

Other persons employed by the community were locals and non-locals who acted as teachers (Hebr. מלמד)⁷⁹ (responsible for the education of the sons of Cracow community members), midwives (Hebr. מילדת, Yidd. היבן),⁸⁰ doctors (Hebr. רופה)⁸¹, street cleaners⁸², public bath personnel (Yidd. בעדיר)⁸³ and sentries (Hebr. שומר, Yidd. שומר השער)⁸⁴ watching over the gates leading to the quarter.⁸⁵

The above presented officials and functionaries by no means fill the entire spectrum of those employed by the community of Cracow. However, they do illustrate how diverse the kahal bureaucratic system was. They give an insight into the interdependencies of specific posts and groups and allow them to be placed in strict communal hierarchy.

The above comments on the manner in which Jewish communities operated in the Republic of Poland, using the community of Cracow as an example, do not present a profound analysis and description of levels of authority stemming from specific posts (these are discussed in detail by M. Bałaban), but only permit the claim that certain matters referred to by Bałaban require further research, in order to confirm or reject his views, as suggested by the author of this article. Furthermore, despite the numerous works analyzing the mechanisms under which the kahal of Cracow operated, other matters require further research on the basis of provisions under the Charter of the Community of Cracow.

⁷⁶ M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, vol. I, p. 341.

⁷⁷ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 1–10, p. 310.

⁷⁸ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 325.

⁷⁹ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 89, pp. 99–100.

⁸⁰ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 87, p. 98.

⁸¹ J. Lachs, *Kronika lekarzy krakowskich do końca XVI wieku*, Cracow 1909, pp. 26–79.

⁸² M. Bałaban, *KJO*, § 72, p. 357.

⁸³ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 323, § 81, p. 95.

⁸⁴ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 325, § 68, p. 346, § 73, pp. 356–357, § 85, p. 97.

⁸⁵ M. Bałaban, *KJO*, §§ 19–36, p. 325 and § 72, p. 356, § 85, p. 97.

